

Budget Twists Weakens Tight Control, Thomas

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Assemblyman, 68th District

A new twist in budgeting has greatly increased the importance of our legislative review of the budget bill, according to our legislative analyst. His 1000-odd page report on his review of the proposed expenditure program recently hit our desks, and will be required reading for all of us during the coming weeks.

Under the new system, fixed amounts were allocated to the various state agencies, and they were given greater freedom in making their own decisions as to how to use the money.

THE ANALYST, in discussing the new procedure, points out that it weakens the former tight review system of the department of finance, and limits the information he and his staff can obtain from the agencies, thus leaving many questions to be answered in our committee hearings on the budget.

He also calls our attention to the fact that the system may cause some units to defer necessary expenditures to the future, and may permit initiation of small new programs which can be expected to expand rapidly.

Using the current year allocation as a base for the next fiscal year can lead to either under or over budgeting in some instances, he comments.

ONE OF HIS remarks is well worth quoting: "The procedure in some instances tends to lead to a shift to chiefs rather than Indians. This budget reflects a number of new requests for supervisory positions which would have had a hard time getting through the department of finance in the past."

While the budget request totals \$2,492,364,068, down about \$146 million below the total approved for the current year, the analyst warns that the reduction is deceptive, since most of it stems from a purely paper cut in highway funds. He also calls our attention to the fact that the general fund picture is distorted since most capital expenditures will be made from bond funds, so the \$123.7 million reduction in the general fund really turns out to be an actual cut in capital outlay of only \$13.8 million.

A RATHER gloomy picture for the future of the general fund is painted in the report. Since taxes were increased in 1959, revenues have jumped \$189 million, but are still some \$40 million below expenditures in the same period. On the basis of this fact, plus the proposed drain on bond funds, the analyst indicates the possibility of a deficit of some \$92 million at the end of fiscal 1962-63.

Under our rules, it is the duty of our joint legislative budget committee to make recommendations as to the state budget, "with a view of reducing the cost of the state government, and securing greater efficiency and economy." So, naturally, the report recommends some trimming in the proposed spending—almost \$68 million. Capital outlay would be cut \$56.7 million, general government \$9.9 million, and local assistance \$1.3 million if the recommendations are followed.

A FEW of the agencies which would be affected are the department of mental hygiene, in which new staffing would be cut by \$1.8 million; division of forestry, in which fire fighter staff would be reduced \$947,000; department of corrections, \$238,000.

Other reductions would be made in the state colleges where a combination of cuts and increased student fees would produce a total saving of \$564,000; in the economic development agency, \$114,000; and in the FEPC, \$68,000, by eliminating 7 proposed new field positions. Each of these proposals is carefully documented with necessary facts for our guidance.

This report gives us an excellent picture of possible economies. All of us will study it carefully.

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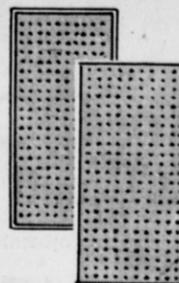
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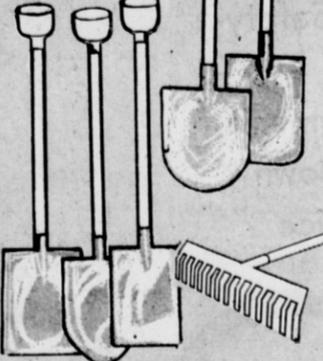
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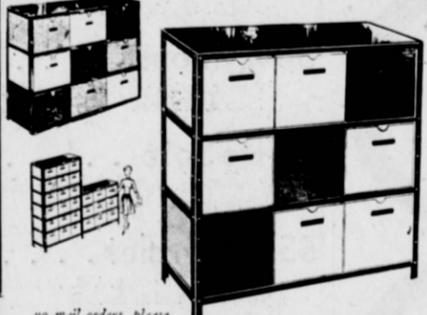
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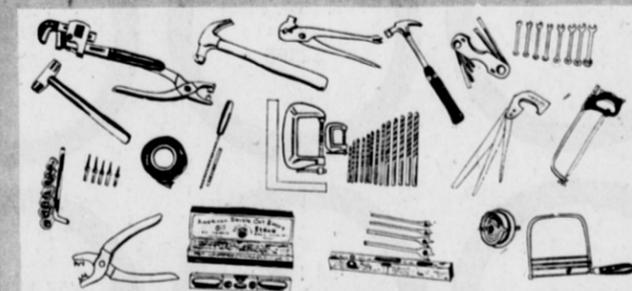
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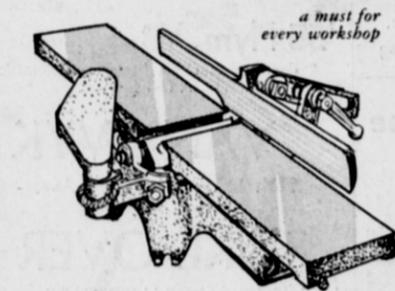
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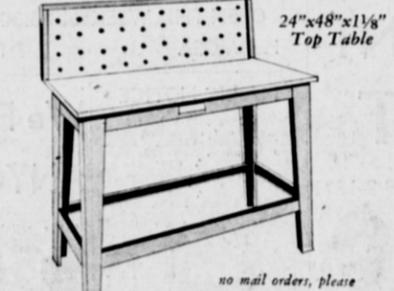


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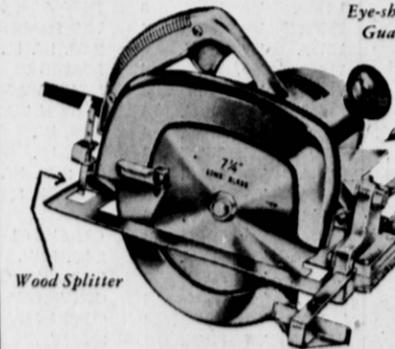


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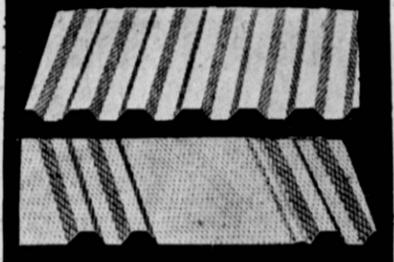


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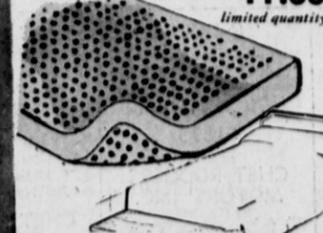
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